

Mrs. Bowser's Sad Birthday

She Tells How Mr. B. Commemorated It by Strangely Disappearing.

AWAITS RETURN HOME

Issues a True Statement of Facts Leading Up to His Dropping Out of Sight.

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AS Mr. Bowser has been missing from home for the last two days and as I wish to satisfy the public that I am not to blame if the worst has happened, I hereby append a true statement of the facts leading up to his disappearance. Having had many previous and disappointing experiences, I had resolved not to say anything regarding my birthday this year. As the days passed and the event drew near Mr. Bowser did not refer to it in any manner, and up to the evening of the very day I fondly imagined that he had forgotten all about it.

He had deceived me, however. He had been keeping track of the time and making ready to commemorate the day in a fitting manner. Mr. Bowser is silent when he has nothing to say.

We had had dinner and were seated for the evening, he with his cigar and



"I WAS GOING BY A SECONDHAND STORE."

newspaper, and I with my book, with the family cat purring in contentment on the rug, when he turned to me and asked:

"Mrs. Bowser, do you know what day this is?"

I replied that I did, and he continued:

"The wheel of time has rolled around and brought you another birthday—the twenty-third since we were married. Perhaps you thought I wasn't taking notice, but I have been making ready for the last three weeks. If it gives you a sad thought to realize that you are one year older, let me offset it by saying that you are looking five years younger than last year."

It was a nice little speech, and I appreciated it. As my eyes filled with tears he reached across the table for my hand and continued:

"We have been together for a long time, my dear, and on this occasion I want to say that I fully appreciate all you have done for me as a helpmate. I could not have married a better woman had I searched the whole world over. There have been times when I have criticized and found fault and rendered myself very disagreeable, but you must forgive me. I am far from perfect, but will make a big effort to improve."

That was nice, too, and there were more tears in my eyes as I told him he was one husband in a million and that if things had not always gone smoothly I was as much to blame as he was. There was moisture in his own eyes as he held my hand and hoped that my very happy birthday would find me in as happy spirits and looking as young and handsome. I treasured his words, and at the same time I hoped he would stop there. He seemed to halt between two opinions for a moment and then said:

"I do not remember that I have ever let one of your birthdays pass without making you a little present to commemorate it, and this occasion will be no exception. I could have gone to the jeweler's and bought some gewgaw, but you know how practical I am."

"But I hope you didn't buy anything more than a pair of gloves," I said.

"You would have appreciated them, but it would have been a cheap way out of it for me."

"Just gloves and stockings, then," Mr. Bowser smiled and looked knowing and went upstairs and returned after five minutes with a bundle. He had smuggled it into the house without my knowledge and succeeded in keeping it safely hidden. My heart felt like lead. That bundle surely contained clothing of some sort.

"A little bundle," he said as he pointed to it—"a few things for the best little woman in the world. I ran across them about a month ago and didn't let the grass grow under my feet in securing them."

"You dear, good man, but you have got me a set of furs!" I said, trying hard to believe in my own words.

"Not quite, dear. You know my opinion of furs is that they are un-

healthy. Thousands of women are brought to the grave every winter through wearing furs, and I don't want to lose you."

"It can't be a new cloak, because you don't know my size."

"I saw no need of a new cloak, as the one you have is only three years old. Guess again."

"You—you wouldn't buy me a new dress?"

He gave me a loving smile and then stood up and made a great ado over opening the bundle. I heard the cat chuckling to himself, but dared not look around. When the paper fell off I saw a number of bright colored garments, but before I could draw my breath Mr. Bowser was holding up a lady's jacket belonging to a suit. It was of red velvet and trimmed with gold braid and gilt buttons, and nothing could have been more gorgeous.

"What do you think of it?" he asked as his smile grew blander.

"I—I—Where did you get it?"

He reached down and picked up the skirt to it. That was even more gorgeous, as it had more gold braid on it.

"Isn't it a daisy?" asked Mr. Bowser.

"But they are secondhand! And where did you get them?"

He reached down and brought up the hat to match. It was a big red hat with a long red plume and a red bird on it. As a matter of fact, the whole thing was a masquerade costume for a girl of seventeen. Such a costume could not have been worn even in a ballet. I sat like one turned to stone. I'd have given my right hand if Mr. Bowser hadn't done it.

"Well, why don't you whoop and rave?" he asked as he turned the hat round and round.

I said it was awfully kind of him, and then I was foolish enough to break down and begin to cry. Some women might have carried it off better, but it was not for me. If my life had depended on it I could not have kept the tears back. For a minute he thought I was weeping for joy, and he patted me on the back and said nothing was too good for me. Then he happened to see the cat grinning, and he got suspicious.

"Well, let's hear from you," he said.

"How came you to get them?" I finally asked.

"Why, I was going by a secondhand store and saw them displayed at a bargain figure. I asked the woman about it, and she said you would look like a girl in these things. Could you have done better yourself?"

It was a hard thing to go through, but I had to do it. I had to tell Mr. Bowser that he had been shamefully taken in and done for; that the colors did not become me and nothing fitted within a mile and that moths were already eating at the skirts of the dress and a mouse had nibbled off the end of the red plume. He didn't say a word for three minutes. I didn't dare look at him or draw my breath during the interval. Then he uttered a wild yell and jumped up and down. Then there was a ripping and tearing and stamping, and the air was full of fragments. I looked up at him, but he had finished and stood panting.

"There they are!" he exclaimed, pointing to the stripes and tatters. "It was for your birthday. I wanted to please you. I poured out my money like water. I have made a jackass of myself, but never again, Mrs. Bowser—never again! You can take your old birthday days and go to the pot with them."

He was down at the hall door and into his overcoat and hat before I could find words to reply. Then the door banged, and he was gone. I had hurt his feelings, and I felt sorry for him. I put on my things and set out on his trail. It was a wild evening, with a gale blowing. I called at the drug store, the butcher shop and the plumber's, but they could give me no trace of Mr. Bowser. I made inquiries of pedestrians, but only one could tell me anything. He was a cross-eyed man with a lump in his left leg, and after thinking the matter over, he replied:

"Yes, I met a fat, saved off man within two blocks of the river, and he was humming along and talking about gold braid and red plumes and ungrateful wives. If he was your husband, maddening, you are a wider than blessed minstrel or I'll eat my hat."

It is two days and two nights now. The hours drag slowly away, and I cannot look out of the window for my tears. Should any one meet Mr. Bowser as he wanders up and down the streets like a lost soul or sits humped up on a log out in the country and cannot believe life worth the living, please tell him that there is one waiting for him and that her name is

SARAH BOWSER, Wife of Mr. Bowser.

Per M. Quad.

Short Term Adoration.

"Look here, Willie! Wot you mean by running around with that Jones girl? Didn't you promise to be true to me forever?"

"Er—yes, Angelina, but I had no idea that forever lasted so long!"—New York World.

Constant Occupation.

"I shall yet discover the pole," said the arctic explorer. "And then?"

"I'll probably be as hard to reach as ever. I will organize expeditions to rediscover it."—Washington Star.

AMERICAN FUN STARTLES.

English Stage Director Given His Intuition on Election Night.

Frederick G. Latham, Charles Dillingham's general stage director, late of London and now of Manhattan, got his first opportunity to see what a New York election night mob was like recently. Innocently, at about the hour the returns began to come in, Mr. Latham in evening dress—silk hat and all the other implements of the code—proceeded to stroll from his New York home—the Lamb's club—to the Knickerbocker theater, where one of his charges, "The Red Mill," with Montgomery and Stone, was playing. When the British Mr. Latham turned into Times square and encountered there the 10,000 celebrants who with horns, feather ticklers and other paraphernalia of noise and play had gathered to root for their several candidates he halted in honest amazement. "My word!" he exclaimed. And just then the outer fringe of the rioters espied the fastidiously clad Mr. Latham and proceeded to get busy, one plumping a bouquet of feathers full in his face, another puffing charcoal in his ear, a third beating a tattoo on the crown of his silk hat. In reporting his experience at the theater later, Mr. Latham concluded with the remark: "You Americans are a great people. I know, but I am sure I shall never be able to quite understand all your ideas of fun!"

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PLAYS AND PLAYERS



MISS ELLEN TERRY

MAY ROBSON'S MAID.

Two Stories of a Girl Who Is Unintentionally Funny.

May Robson, who is playing with Francis Wilson in "The Mountain Climber," is the princess of story tellers, and can give cards and spades to Willie Collier, Wilton Lackaye, and De Wolf Hopper and beat them out at their own game.

Miss Robson's maid is quite as celebrated for her funny sayings as Miss Robson herself, with this difference: The maid never intends to be funny, and the actress does. During a recent engagement in Boston a friend of Miss Robson sent her a volume of Ethel Watts Mumford's poems. When it came the actress said to the maid: "You may open the package for me." The girl slowly unfolded the parcel and opened the book, and then said in utmost surprise and disappointment: "What did he want to send you a book of poetry for? You've got one at home."

Eyes never is the least bit shaken. She goes on her way calmly, notwithstanding Miss Robson is at times apt to be somewhat of a whirlwind. The other day the mistress came in and found her foot in the characteristic way that her friends know, she said: "Why will you be so untidy? You drive me crazy. You will simply be so dirty they won't take you in at the hotels. I cannot understand why you do this, when you know I have talked to you so much. It is growing worse and worse, and from an untidy girl you will become an absolutely slovenly old woman."

After this tirade the girl looked up calmly and said to Miss Robson: "Don't forget to mail your letters, will you?"

May subsided with a laugh.

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BELASCO'S STAGE METHODS.

Pictorial Sense of Manager Responsible for Unusual Efforts.

Once upon a time a wager was made in a club in New York that a spectator might go to the Belasco theater, stand behind the glass partition at the back of the parlor, hear scarcely any word that was spoken on the stage, but see all that passed on it, and then be able to give an intelligible and comprehensive account of a play of which he knew no more in advance than what the program contained. The test was made and the spectator returned to the club and gave a surprisingly full and accurate account of the play. In other words, Mr. Belasco's pictorial sense is so vivid and so fine and he employs it so fluently and impressively that the spoken word becomes with him almost an accessory. Of none of his pieces has this been truer than of "The Rose of the Rancho." The attentive listener recalls with difficulty what the characters have said, but he remembers clearly and sharply the pictures that he has seen and that made passion animate or that crystallized a mood. In the second act in particular there are high-pitched emotions in vivid play and the whole impression of it is so much rather than hearing them. It is so much Mr. Belasco's unique master of the picture stage.

It Might Have Been.

Before he became a professional singer, Fritz Schell, of "Mile Modiste," had planned to become a school-teacher in Vienna. Comedian Frank Daniels' first ambition was to become a wood-engraver, a craft at which he served three years in Boston before turning actor. David Montgomery's boyhood dream of fame lay in becoming a cyclist seercher, and his partner's, Frederick Stone's, in setting on a professional baseball team. Kyle Hollow mastered navigation before turning player, and Robert Loraine served a short term as an attorney's clerk. Before the stage won her Mrs. Leslie Carter had hopes of becoming a trained nurse.

Herbert's Irish.

Victor Herbert, the composer, was born in Dublin, Ireland, February 1, 1859, and as the grandson of the distinguished poet, painter, dramatist, musician and novelist, Samuel Lover, he comes by his musical talents naturally. When a child he was taken to Germany, and at the age of seven became a student of music. His first prominent position was as first cellist of the court orchestra Stuttgart, at the age of 27. His exceptional ability was not long put up in the provincial German capital, however, and he was soon winning laurels in this country.

BEHIND THE FOOTLIGHTS.

Bertha Galland has been compelled by ill health to sever her connection with the Belasco forces, and will retire for the balance of the season.

May Buckley, who was the original Princess Michael in "The Shepherd King," has rejoined Wright Lorimer, and will again be seen in the part.

Following the remarkable success achieved by Rose Stahl in "The Chorus Lady," which is now in its fifth month in New York, James Forbes, the author of the comedy, is engaged in novelizing his play.

WHERE JOHN D. WILL SKATE.

Rockefeller to Have a Private Pond at Lakewood, N. J.

Lakewood, N. J.—Next to golf, John D. Rockefeller's favorite outdoor pastime is skating. Although he is within three years of attaining the biblical fulness of age, three-score years and ten, Mr. Rockefeller, when he puts on a pair of skates and gets on the ice, is as agile as a boy of 12.

In order that he may indulge his fondness for this pastime, and at the same time avoid the publicity which attends his every movement, Mr. Rockefeller is making at his country place here an artificial lake, four acres in extent. A small army of workmen is



Site of Rockefeller's Artificial Lake.

now engaged in making the excavation for the lake.

The site of this skating pond was chosen with much care by Mr. Rockefeller. His estate at Lakewood comprises 500 acres, most of it pine forest. It is back from the road about an eighth of a mile and the house is screened from the view of observers by a thick barrier of pine trees. Mr. Rockefeller has chosen a sheltered spot for his lake, about 100 yards beyond this barrier. Should any curious visitor succeed in getting through this pine hedge, he would find himself in a patch of thickly grown nettles through which it would be impossible to break his way.

Beyond this nettles patch is to be the skating pond. On the border of the further shore of the lake is a water tower, which serves also the purpose of a watch tower. A balcony has been built around this tower, and whenever Mr. Rockefeller is out on the grounds, whether playing golf or riding his bicycle over the miles of smooth roads that he has built, a watchman is stationed in this balcony to give warning of approaching intruders.

SOCIETY LEADER CARRIES CANE.

Pretty Pauline French Starts Fad at Newport.

Newport, R. I.—Miss Pauline French, the pretty niece of Mrs. Alfred G. Vanderbilt, has taken on the cane-carrying habit, and every morning and afternoon, when she is not speeding her high-stepping pony she may be seen hiking up and down Bellevue avenue, using a handsome walking stick, man-fashion. As Miss French is a leader among the young set of girls, it is probable that the fad will be taken up generally among the young people and that in the near future the society belle without her cane will be an uncommon sight.

Tall and stately, as well as pretty, Miss French, with her cane in her



Miss Pauline French.

hand, presents a very attractive picture.

Cane carrying among women appears to be a natural development of a tendency of the time. After the manner of the London girls, society belles tried carrying stuffed bears during the summer, but the American girl is too vivacious to keep steadily company with such an inanimate object. Then more than ever the women took to carrying their pet poodles about in their arms, but the little fellows did not like it, and their constant squirming became a menace to lace sleeves. The cane, however, is a help-in-itself, and now that women must carry something to really be in style, it is evidently to be the thing.

Miss French's cane has a handle shaped like a shepherd's crook. It is bound with gold splendidly chased and is adorned with a ribbon bow which is changed daily to match the costume.

A Natural Query.

Mrs. Snobson (to Mrs. Smith)—nee Vere de Vere—whom she has been cutting, but, meeting her at the duchess's, makes up her mind to be civil!—So glad to see you, Mrs. Smith! You really must dine with me one day next week.

Mrs. Smith—Thanks. Why?—Punch.

Boy Has Marvelous Voice.

The illustrious Zetting voice of Moses Mirsky, the Russian lad, 12 years old, whose voice has attracted much attention, as the Wunderkind singer. He is the son of Russian Jewish parents and was reared in London, where he was heard in public for the first time three years ago. He began as a singer of synagogue music.

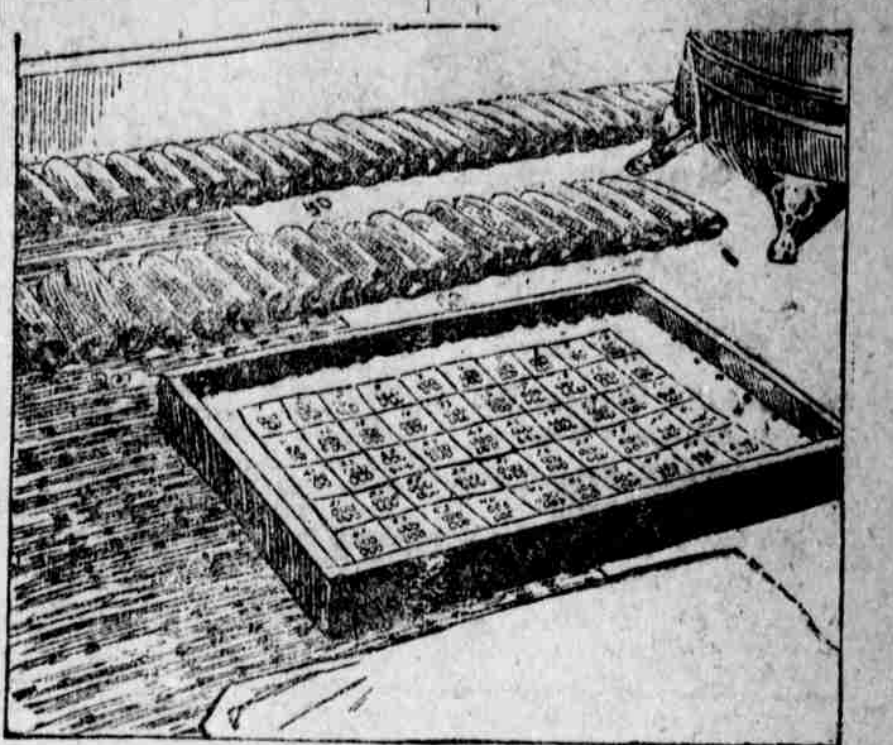
METHOD OF TESTING FOR SELECTION OF GOOD SEED CORN

Better Quality of Seed Means Larger Stand, Bigger Crops and More Money for the Farmer—By Prof. John E. Cameron.

John E. Cameron, professor of biology in the Central High school, has proven, in experiments made by himself and by many farmers in northern Missouri and southern Iowa, that it pays big returns to the farmer to select his seed corn by germination tests. It is well known to the majority of farmers that, no matter how well seed corn is selected, when it is planted there is no certainty that all of it will come up, and, in fact, there are always a large number of hills in every acre of corn in which

laid upon its. Each square is numbered.

"The cloth is laid down upon the earth or sawdust in the box and pressed down tightly and evenly. Then the farmer takes an ear of corn and picks three kernels off one side and three off the other and lays the six kernels upon one of the squares upon the cloth. He carefully tags the ear of corn with the number of that particular square, and lays it away. He goes on in this way until he has six grains of corn upon each numbered square. Then he puts an-



Germinating Box and Numbered Ears of Corn.

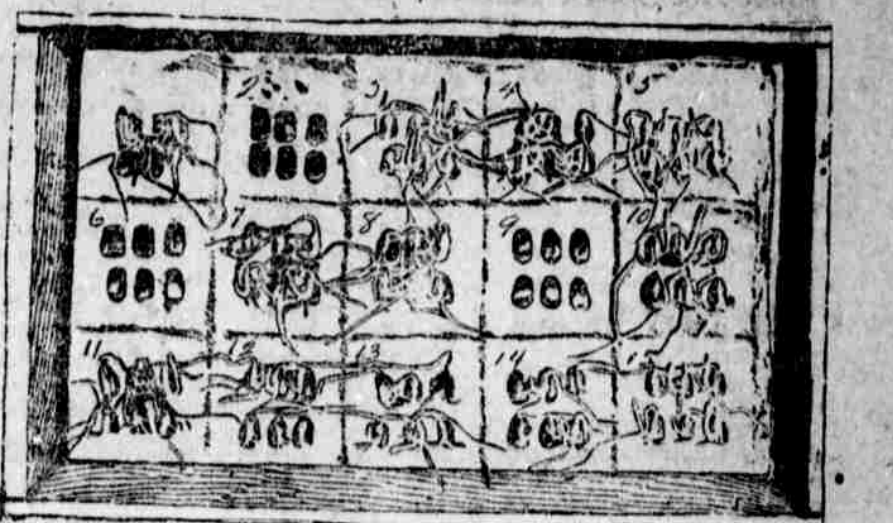
the seed failed to germinate. Every vacant hill represents so much time, labor and money lost.

It requires only a little trouble and work to test the seed before planting that every kernel will germinate and send up its green shoots.

"The seed corn," said Prof. Cameron, "is selected in the fall. The farmer should choose the largest ears with the best looking grains of corn upon them and lay them away until the lat-

other square of muslin over the kernels in the box, being careful not to disturb them, and over this puts a larger cloth wide enough for its sides to lap over the sides of the box. The box is then filled up with earth or moist sawdust and is set away in the living room or some other place where there is the same temperature.

"At the end of a week the farmer may lift up the cloth, which takes up the earth or sawdust with it, and see if the corn is sprouted. If not well



Germinating Box After Ten Days (In Three of the Squares the Grains Did Not Sprout).

ter part of February or the first of March. Some of those ears will have upon them grains of corn that will germinate. Others will have all dead kernels. The farmer proves the good and bad ears in the following manner:

"He makes a wooden box about two by four feet in size and six inches deep. He fills it half full of moist sand, earth or sawdust. He cuts a piece of muslin exactly the size to fit into the box, and with a lead pencil lays it off in small squares, as shown in the picture, each square large enough for six kernels of corn to be

sprouted put the cloth and earth back again for a few days longer, and then take it off, being careful to not move the kernels off their respective squares.

"It will be found that some of the kernels have germinated well, some have germinated indifferently and some have not sprouted at all. By comparing the numbers upon the squares with the numbers upon the ears of corn the farmer can pick out the ears which sprouted best and these he lays away for seed. The dead and indifferent ones he discards entirely."

The Growing of Peonies

Peonies may be planted this fall or next spring. It is more satisfactory to plant them in the fall so the earliest warmth of the spring may start them growing. They should be planted in a rich soil; the blooms will develop better if in a slightly shady situation, though they do well when exposed to the sun. After planting they require little except a mulch of manure and plenty of water in the growing season.

The older a peony gets, the better it blooms. It is nothing unusual to see a bed that has been undisturbed for ten to 25 years. This was the favorite flower of our grandfathers, and it is regaining its popularity, and coming new glory. So many different colors are now available, ranging from snow white through red, yellow, rose, purple and delicate pink, that the peony has become a rival of the rose. During its season it floods the flower markets, almost to the exclusion of other flowers.

The plant increases rapidly. It has been estimated that a vigorous plant will produce 1,000 plants in ten years.

Another good point is its freedom from disease. New plants are obtained by division of the roots or tubers of the old ones. They may be taken up in the fall, or in the spring before growth starts. New varieties are generally produced by planting the seed of hy-

bridized flowers, but this is a process that it is better to leave to the experts. Peony roots may be purchased at this time of the year, from any florist, the older plants being most expensive.

Cold Storage for Farmers.—Putting first-class apples in cold storage for sale in late winter or early spring, is usually very profitable, says Farming. Other fruit and farm products may also be stored to advantage. The expense of a cold storage plant precludes its use by most fruit growers. Cooperation among farmers will sometimes be possible along this line. Granges and other farmers' organizations may do educational and practical work also. But available for every farmer are the refrigerating plants now found in almost every city. Rooms or space may be rented as one needs. Generally it is best to store in the city where it is intended to sell, that the produce may be on the ground in case of an advantageous market. Many a grower of fine fruit would be dollars ahead by availing himself of cold storage facilities.

Fattening Turkeys.—Try feeding a few young turkeys for rapid gains. Shut them in clean, light and airy pens and feed them all they will eat, for a month, of corn, oats and wheat either whole or partly ground. The meat will be wonderfully improved in quality.